

FP7-Success story of Ayanda Biosystems SA



The PharMEA platform:
Multi-Electrode Array
technology based platform for
industrial pharmacology and
toxicology drug screening



Programme:
FP7 Capacities

Sub-programme:
Research for the benefit for SMEs

Project coordinator
Dr. Marc Heuschkel on behalf of
Ayanda Biosystems SA



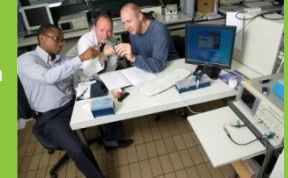
Project Duration
September 2009 – November 2011

The project PharMEA is based on the technology platform of multi-electrode arrays (MEAs), which have been widely used for electrophysiological experiments on neuronal and cardiac tissues.

Ayanda Biosystems SA	CH SME
Bio-Logic SAS	F SME
Capsant Neurotechnologies Ltd.	UK SME
CEA-LETI	F OTH
HEPIA	CH UNI
HEIG-VD	CH UNI
Synome Ltd.	UK SME

Ayanda Biosystems SA is a small technology development company based in Lausanne, Switzerland. It was founded in 2011 as a spin-off from the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Lausanne (EPFL). Dr. Solomzi Makohliso, the CEO of the company and his team focus on developing innovative tools and solutions that address urgent needs in healthcare and the life sciences industry, with a particular focus on medical diagnostics and drug discovery applications.

i interview



The team

In your opinion, what elements contributed most to the success of your proposal?

Solomzi Makohliso (CEO Ayanda Biosystems SA):

"The choice of the right partners was very important. There was a clear alignment of objectives and no interference between partners. The commitment of R&D partners was very clear. This was probably the key success and that the motivation of all involved partners was very high throughout the whole project duration. The consortium was a complementary mix of partners with specialized technical and biological competences"

How did you get involved in this project?

Do you have any advice for other SMEs/Academia that would like to get involved in such projects?

Solomzi Makohliso (CEO Ayanda Biosystems SA):

"We realized that MEAs which we developed during the former EU-funded research project SLIC, are niche products and the market was very small at that time. PharMEA's aim was adapt MEA's for use in drug discovery and development. Therefore, our goal was to enter a bigger market, such as the pharmaceutical sector and industry. I would advice SMEs/Academia to have a clear objective and aim for the project and especially, what you would like to achieve with it. You need to have a strategy behind."

What has been the greatest success of the project?

Solomzi Makohliso (CEO Ayanda Biosystems SA):

"We have developed new cutting edge MEA tools and applications tailored for the drug discovery industry. One major result of this project is that we founded another spin-off company called Qwane Biosciences SA which is commercializing and further developing MEA biochips for basic research in electrophysiology, secondary drug screening and safety pharmacology applications. This success was mainly based on the collaborative consortium. It remained committed throughout the whole time of the project."